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Environmental News

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EPA Reminds Public to Use Woonasquatucket River and Allendale Pond Responsibly

BOSTON – Now that water levels on North Providence, RI's Allendale Pond have been restored, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's New England Office is reminding the public to avoid contact with sediments in the pond and the Woonasquatucket River.

"With Allendale Pond restored to its pre-1991 levels, it is an appealing spot for children," said Robert W. Varney, regional administrator of EPA's New England Office. "Residents are encouraged to remind their children to refrain from playing in the river, and not to eat fish caught from the river."

The restoration of Allendale Dam is a part of a \$2.6 million cleanup plan for the Woonasquatucket River and area along the river. The plan, known as a non-time critical removal action, was approved by EPA last fall. The project included removing remnants of the former dam, constructing a new spillway, and excavating and transporting off-site 350 cubic yards of soil and sediment. This month the area will be revegetated and landscaped using materials similar to the existing vegetation in the floodplain area.

Loureiro Engineering Associates Inc. of Plainville, CT performed the construction activities on behalf of four potentially responsible parties at the site who are funding the cleanup activities.

Key elements of the cleanup plan include:

- * Restoring Allendale Dam and returning Allendale Pond water levels to its original elevation.
- * Additional work still needs to be done on floodplain soils and further investigations of the river are ongoing in an effort to determine a long term cleanup plan for the entire project. Information will be provided to the public as it becomes available.

In the meantime, EPA continues to remind the public to use the river responsibly. This includes:

- not swimming or boating in Allendale Pond or playing on the newly restored Allendale Dam;

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- not to eating fish, turtles, eels or plants from the Woonasquatucket River downstream of the Smithfield Sewage Treatment Plant. This includes Johnston, North Providence and Providence;
- not wading in the shallow water or swimming in the river;
- obeying the warning signs posted along the river;
- walking, running or bike riding along the river are acceptable activities. However, people should wash thoroughly after any contact with the river water or sediment.

Beginning this week, additional sampling of floodplain soils along the river is planned.

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